

A rare, late-17th century, beech upholstered stool

Sold



Description

The stuff-over top, re-upholstered in modern gross and petit-point needlework. Standing on turned legs with carved, mushroom cappings, joined by a cross stretcher with a replaced finial, ending in braganza feet. Wear to original ebonised or black japanned finish exposing beech frame. English, fourth quarter of the 17th century. 50381076.

This piece is sophisticated, elegant and refined. The fine turnings, and x-stretcher evolved into the design of late-17th century English furniture in response to Continental fashions. At the same time, cabinet makers responded to the fashion for Oriental laquered furniture by ebonising or black-japanning beech furniture. Recipes for this using lamp-black are given in Stalker & Parker's *A Treatise of Japanning & Varnishing*, 1688; 'With this varnish and black mixt together varnish over your thing three times, permitting it to dry thoroughly between every turn', followed by other applications. In this case, probably due to the utilitarian nature of the stool which would have been handled a great deal the original black varnish has been rubbed away to expose the beech beneath which has matured to an excellent colour and patina.

Although the upholstered seat had been introduced in the reign of Elizabeth I, it re-emerged after the Restoration as exiles sought to introduce the comfort they had experienced abroad in their homes. This piece would have been made for a substantial household, probably en-suite with a fine sidetable. Very few late-17th century upholstered stools survive, especially in this condition, largely due to the ravages of damp floors and woodworm. However the quality of this piece has probably served to protect it over the years, as it has been well cared for